interest in their cultural heritage has not been able to secure the enthusiastic response from the Indian industry;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to achieve the desired target?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI): (a) to (c) The National Culture Fund (NCF in short) though set up on 28.11.96, was formally launched only on 29.3.97 by the Government of India. As such, the NCF has effectively completed only about 8 month's of its existence—a rather small period for an organisation that is expected to innovate on the Indian culture scene on a wide range. In fact, the NCF is yet to be considered in its formative phase needing the systemic support and energies of the Department of Culture for becoming fully operational. While this is being provided and the NCF seems at the threshold of a self sustaining momentum, the Department of Culture has concurrently taken a number of initiatives intended to actualise the objectives of the NCF. These include constitution of two bodies, as provided for in the Notification, for the management of the NCF; publicising the NCF through consultations with the representatives of the community and corporate sector and through letters to a large number of individuals and institutions; and formulation of a strategy for actuat ing the goals of the NCF. These in-itiatives have led to a better response to the NCF and the prospect of contributions to it is looking up. The Department of Culture is, therefore, reasonably optimistic about the future and success of the NCF.

Compensation to victims of Rail accidents

*144. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether compensation to victims of rail accident have been doubled recently;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that in a large number of rail accident cases, Government have not yet given any compensa-tion; and

(d) if so, the facts thereof and steps taken to simplify the norms of compensation?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS P ASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Amount of compensation in case of death and permanent disability has been raised from Rs. 2 lakhs to Rs. 4 lakhs. In case of injuries, the minimum amount has been raised from Rs. 16,000/- to Rs. 32,000/- and the maximum from Rs. 1.80 lakhs to Rs. 3.60 lakhs. These enhanced rates of compensation have been made effective for the train accidents and untoward incidents which have taken place w.e.f. 1.11.97.

(c) and (d) As on 1.11.97, there arc 703 such cases of claims. The claims are decided by the Railway Claims Tribunal and as soon as the decrees are awarded by the Tribunal, prompt action is taken towards payment of compensation.

Following steps are being taken for speedy disposal of claims of passengers:—

I. *Administrative Action:*

(i) Instructions have been issued to all Zonal Railways that as soon as a passenger train accident or untoward incident takes place all particulars of injured and killed may be obtained, claim application formssent to claimants, and the record should also be made available to the concerned bench of Railway Claims Tribunal.

(ii) When claims are filed and put up for hearing, the railways should give all possible assistance to the tribunal for speedy settlement.

(iii) Written statements are to be filed by the railways in such cases within 30 days after receipt of notice from RCT.

(iv) After the decreetal amount of claim has been sanctioned, railways have

to ensure that cheques are issued and despatched within a period of 15 days.

II. *Action by the Tribunal:*

(i) Top priority is given to the disposal of accident claims cases.

(ii) Circuit benches are held from time to time at stations other than hcadquar-ters of the bench for convenience of claimants.

(iii) Members from one bench are de-puted to other benches whenever required due to non-availability of a member at that bench.

(iv) Requests of claimants are allowed for transfer of cases from one bench to the other near to their residence for their convenience.

(v) Adjournments are not ordinarily granted to the parties.

Transfer of DMS to Delhi Government

*145. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR:
SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government had decided to handover the Delhi Milk Scheme to Delhi Government sans liabilities which have accumulated as on 1st October, 1997;

(b) If so, the extent of accumulated liabilities as on October 1, 1997 and April, 1 1997, 1996, and 1995; and

(c) the reasons for the heavy losses and the liabilities incurred year after year?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISH-RA): (a) In June 1997 Government of India have approved transfer of the Delhi Milk Scheme (DMS) to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD). The Chief Minister of GNCTD had met the Agriculture Minister on 10.9.1997 and informed that GNCTD will take over control of DMS with effect from 1.10.1997. Subsequent to that, there has been no response from GNCTD.

(b) and (c) During the last three years the following has been the excess of expenditure over receipts:

	Rs. (crores)
1994-95	4.63
1995-96	45.14
1996-97	49.68

Losses are primarily due to the selling price of milk being kept below the cost of production. The high cost of distribution is another reason.

Deficits have been met through budget-ary support provided by the Government of India. Consequently DMS does not have any accumulated liabilities to discharge.

Stcrlitc Industries at Tuticorin

*146. SHRI N. RAJENDRAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what arc the reasons for which Government have not taken any serious action against Sterlite Industries at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu inspite of repeated protest and proven health hazards of its activities to the local people.

(b) whether non-action on the part of Government indicates Government's failure in controlling a defaulting multinational;

(c) whether Central Government intends to initiate any fresh action against the said company;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) As per the recent report of Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, M/s Sterlite Industries Ltd. has taken necessary pollution control measures and is complying with the prescribed standards.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

(e) The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board is regularly monitoring the air and water quality of the surrounding areas,